The Expiring Commission.—The clerk repeated at this court the answer received by him from the Lord Chancellor's secretary in reference to the renewal of the commission: the particulars of this interview appeared in THE BUILDER of last week.

The chairman, on so important a matter, wished the opinion of the court:—Whether the answer of the Lord Chancellor's secretary, being a verbal one, could, in point of law, be received; and whether a written communication should not be obtained from the Lord Chancellor on the subject?

Mr. Willoughby said the court could not be appointed at the whim of the Lord Chancellor, as Acts of Parliament had declared that commissions of sewers should issue, and merely invested the Lord Chancellor for the time being with powers to nominate and appoint the commissioners; and these powers had been followed up, confirmed, and ratified. Something, too, he thought, was due to themselves, who had laboured for the benefit of the public, to know on what grounds they were to be deprived of the commission. He had himself for many years been honoured with the commission, and he knew that the large body of gentlemen had been appointed on public and not on private or personal grounds. The court had recently been invested with additional powers by Act of Parliament, and those additional powers had been granted with the concurrence of Government itself;—for to his knowledge Lord Morpeth had said, that if the Government were not in a position to carry their own measure, they should support the bill for extending the powers of this court. Was that the time, then, he asked, for reasons they did not know, to be struck out of the commission? It was due to this court that some means should be taken to draw the Lord Chancellor's attention to this circumstance,—that one Parliament had conferred additional powers, which were just being developed, and before the Parliament could meet again that they were to be deprived of that power. As a legal man, and having every respect for the high office of Lord Chancellor, he could not consent, after years of service on behalf of the public, to have his name struck out of the commission without having some reason why it was done. He submitted, that as their powers had been conferred by Parliament, they could not be taken away until Parliament in its wisdom should think proper to do so. The commissioner concluded by moving:—"That a deputation do wait upon the Lord High Chancellor, respectfully urging him, for the benefit of the public, to renew the commission."

Mr. Hawkes thought they had done quite enough already, and that it would be the most dignified course not to complain of not being re-appointed. As to what had been said of the court now sitting, and the slanders uttered against them at Gwydyr House, why had they not appointed some person to answer these slanders? Even their own surveyor had declared here and elsewhere that that court ought not to continue. He hoped the commission would not be renewed, for the commissioners were anxious to get the power they so long held and so long misused; and instead of going bowing and scraping it would be better for them at once to wind up their affairs and retire with something like dignity.

Other commissioners having spoken, the chairman put the motion, which was carried by a majority of 12 to 8.

Messrs. Alderman Johnson, E. Willoughby, T. L. Donaldson, France, and Allason, were chosen to form the deputation.

The Case of Mrs. Webb.—The solicitor reported that no declaration had been filed in the case of Mrs. Webb by Mr. Farlar; and in reference to this subject a letter was read from Mr. Farlar, protesting against the rates being used for defending Mrs Webb's case, and in which the terms "dishonourable," "dishonest," "ridiculous," "robbery," &c., were plentifully scattered. No order was made on it, and it was laid on the table.

Improvement of the Drainage of Westminster, Government Offices, &c.—The court next proceeded to consider the report of the surveyor on the drainage of the parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster, and the formation of a new sewer on the proposed line of Victoria-street, discharging itself into the river Thames at Richmond-terrace, and affording a complete drainage of the Government offices in Whitehall, Downing-street, &c. The expense is estimated at 5,000*l.* A letter was read from the Westminster Improvement Commissioners, stating that their works were at a stand, and must remain so until the proposed sewer was built.

After some discussion, a long conversation ensued on the propriety of 9-inch work for a sewer of such dimensions, and it was agreed, that if in the execution of it the surveyor should see any objection to it, he should make a special report to the court.

It was then resolved that the report and plan of the surveyor be adopted, and that the work be sanctioned as soon as the necessary estimates can be prepared.

The Sanatory Movement in Hammersmith and Fulham.—Mr. Bathurst laid before the court the following memorial from the parishes of Hammersmith and Fulham:—

"*To the Commissioners of Sewers for Westminster and Part of Middlesex.*

Board Room, Hammersmith, Nov. 18.

That this board having instituted an inquiry into the sanatory state of the parishes composing this union, and as to how far the health of the inhabitants may be affected by nuisances existing from, or caused by the want of sufficient drainage or sewerage, or otherwise, and having received the reports of their medical officers, and also reports from the respective boards of highways (which reports are of the most unfavourable nature), do deeply deplore the circumstances in which the parishes both of Hammersmith and Fulham are placed for want of effectual and sufficient sewerage and drainage; and the nuisances seriously affecting the health of the inhabitants, which exist from those causes, appear to this board to require immediate attention.

That a copy of this resolution, and of the reports on which it is founded, be transmitted to the Honourable the Commissioners of Sewers for the City and Liberty of Westminster, and their attention called to the subject, in the hope that they will provide an early and efficient remedy.

A. G. CHANCE, Clerk."

The commissioner, in support of the memorial, said this court could confer no greater favour than taking these parishes under their protection.

Mr. Crook, of Hammersmith, expressed his willingness to advance 1,000*l.* for this object, if the court would ensure him a return of his capital.

New Books.

Principles of the Mechanics of Machinery and Engineering. By JULIUS WEISBACH, Professor of Mechanics and Applied-Mathematics in the Royal Mining Academy of Freiberg. Vol. I. London: Hippolyte Baillière, Regent-street.

PROFESSOR WEISBACH has by this production rendered very essential service to the mechanical and engineering professions, and it is to be hoped that his labours will be duly appreciated, and that he will meet the reward to which he is so justly entitled by his merits as a mechanical engineer.

The book before us is a translation from the German, and we are led to infer, from the style and manner of the performance, that the spirit of the original has been well preserved. The work is divided into sections, and subdivided into chapters; and these chapters are again distributed into paragraphs, distinguished by numerals. This system of division and subdivision is convenient for reference, but it has always appeared to us as having a tendency to disfigure and confuse the page, at least when carried to excess, as we are somewhat apprehensive is the case in the present instance; and unless the numerals are so applied as to form a connected chain, the scheme had better be abandoned altogether.

The book opens with a section on *phoronomy* (the term is new to us), or the pure mathematical science of motion. This is a very important department of theoretical mechanics, and Professor Weisbach has done it ample justice: his definitions of the different kinds of motion are the best that we have seen; the examples are well chosen and appropriate, and the graphical representations quite to the purpose. Chapter I. treats of simple motion, and Chapter II. of compound motion, which completes the section.

The second section treats of mechanics, or the physical science of motion in general; it consists, like the former, of two chapters: the first chapter is devoted to the fundamental principles of mechanics, and the second to the mechanics of a material point. The division of forces, and the division of mechanics in the first chapter, is much to the point, but we cannot accord our approval of the attempt to introduce so many new terms, even although, in some instances, they may bear a more definite signification than those in general use. In the second chapter, the parallelogram of forces is very skilfully handled, as far as it goes; and the diagrams, with white lines on a dark ground, which are here introduced, are well executed, but we cannot say that we approve of the notation employed,—we mean the mode of representing the same kind of quantities by the same letter of the alphabet, with a number at the lower right-hand corner of it. This mode of distinction may answer very well in the diagrams themselves, but it is very apt to cause confusion in the analytical expressions.

The third section treats of the *statics of rigid bodies*; it is subdivided into six chapters, embracing the several topics which are peculiar to this department of mechanical science. The subject of each chapter is skilfully discussed, and in several of them we are presented with some new and interesting ideas. In the first chapter, which treats of the composition of *forces in a plane*, and of *forces in space*, the subject of the parallelogram of forces is rendered complete, and, under our author's management, it becomes a very seductive branch of practical science.

The doctrine of the centre of gravity, as treated in the second chapter, is quite to our taste; and the properties of Guldinus, there incidentally alluded to, have long been favourite subjects of investigation to ourselves, yet we cannot help thinking that, in consequence of their extensive application to the determination of the surfaces and contents of solids of revolution, a very useful independent work might be composed on the subject.

The third chapter is on the equilibrium of bodies rigidly connected and supported. This is a very interesting topic, and comprehends the doctrine of *pressure on an axis*; *equilibrium of forces about an axis*; the *theory of the lever*; *pressure of bodies on one another*; *stability, statical and dynamical*; *theory of the inclined plane*; *principle of virtual velocities*, and the *theory of the wedge*. Chapter IV. is on the *equilibrium of funicular machines*. This is a topic fraught with the most fruitful consequences: it embraces the doctrine of the *tension of cords*; the *principles of the catenary* and *suspension bridges*; the *theory of the pulley* and of the *wheel and axle*. These several subjects are treated by our author in a skilful manner; and the same remark will apply to the remaining part of the work,—for to analyse the whole would far exceed the limits which can be allowed in the pages of our journal.

Upon the whole, the work which has called forth these remarks is one of the most interesting to a moderately-informed mathematician that has been laid before us for some time; and we may safely term it a *scientific gem*.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Tenders have been called for by advertisement for the excavation of an open cutting and earthwork for driving a plant or level near Swansea; for deepening four wells at the Barracks, Winchester; and for constructing a new floating dock at Leith, with an extension of breakwaters, and the erection of a low-water pier and other works.

COMPETITION.—Designs for a workhouse for 300 inmates, on the six-class system, are advertised for by the York Union Guardians. Premium for approved design 30*l.*, or employment to carry out the design, as the guardians shall decide.

MIDDLESEX LUNATIC ASYLUM COMPETITION.—The decision is not yet made, but may be expected, we are told, in the beginning of next month.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*J. S.*" (Vauxhall.)—We have an opportunity to give the intention a trial, if he is so disposed.

"*W. H.*"—Thanks.

"*H. A. M.*" will find much advantage from drawing from existing forms, foliage, &c.

"*T. S. D.*"—Further information is forthcoming. We shall be much pleased to hear from Mr. D.

"*X.*"—The Caxton Memorial seems to have "died the death."

"*J. T.*"—We should say it is a party-wall; but this would depend on the terms of the arrangement.

"*M. and C.*"—The inventor of the material in question does not at present give his name.

"*D.*" (Bath.)—Received. Further explanation is desirable.

"*J. S.*" will find mention of works on "Furniture" in our next number.

"*Fire-Proof Cement.*"—A correspondent wishes to know the best for stores. Mr. Copeland (Lincoln's-inn-fields) has patented a cement of the sort.

"*Drilling Machines.*"—We refer our correspondents who asked for sources of further information on this subject to the present Week's RAILWAY SUPPLEMENT.

Received.—"R. Davis." Mr. L. (Lewisham). "Peter Palette." "J. W." "J. M." (Bridgewater). "An Architect and a Member of the Institute." "Regular Subscriber." "F. D." "G. R. C." "F. W. B." "Mo" "Guardian."

Books Received.—"Transportation and Convict Discipline Considered," by Mr. Zachary P. Pronck (Simmonds, Bucklersbury). "Fielder's Patent for Improvements in the Construction of Iron Beams or Girders."

"*Books, Prices, and Addresses.*"—We have not time to point out books or find addresses.

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